

FALL 2011

THE MINSTREL



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THE MINSTREL
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GONE. BROKEN.

by Joshua Hildebrandt

Almost agonizingly, the pale, tired sun sets into the crystalline lake, russet-gold rays mingling with icy blue and purple. Faint breezes waft off the rippling waves, carrying the briny scent through the frosted air, combing through the sparse pine needles. The wind is a sigh off the lake, a faint moan, too old to show any effort. Already the moon is conquering the eastern sky, glaring harshly at the frozen land below. A few lonely snowflakes drift in the purple air, glinting briefly before landing on the frozen grass, left over from last summer.

One snowflake lands on the tips of my fingers, intricate details melting away into a drop that runs to my palm. Once I would have felt the cold, the minor chill, but now everything is numb. Like a river frozen by the winds of winter, there is no feeling, no emotion under this mask. Once my eyes would have drifted over the growing clouds in the winter sky, not stare empty, glassy. My eyes drift close, soft black fringe shutting out the twilight sky.

How could I forget? Darkness has not been my friend since . . . since it was all taken away.

My eyes pop open, light flooding deep into my being. His voice crackles in my head, sinister, velvet, oozing contempt. I can't take this anymore.

Sitting up, I wrap my arms around my knees, burying my face in the rough but familiar texture of my jeans. If only I could forget everything, wipe the slate clean. If only the falling snow would wash everything away. Cleanse my mind from the shadows, the inky darkness that lingers, fingerprints of the past. But nothing can erase my memories.

I squeeze my eyes shut, wish for tears to come, to trickle down my frostbitten cheeks. There are none. I am frozen, like the ice that steals across the lakeshore. Frozen with the haunting voice in my head.

I can hear him laughing and I want to scream, vomit. My skin tingles and a shiver ripples up my back. It feels like he's always right behind me. Always there.

Desperation urges me to my feet, slipping on the icy rocks to the creaking wooden planks of the dock. It rocks back and forth with the waves, each step further out from the safety of land. The dark water beckons, curling its chilled fingers, whispering my name in hushed tones. One foot forward in front of the other. I can't stop. The water is an undulating surface, dark, a blank canvas. No bubbles work their way to the grey surface, no light penetrates its depths. It's an empty canvas, waiting to be painted with my thrashing screams.

The sun is gone. The sky, just like the water is black, cold, heartless. There is no moon, just a bleak smear of darker clouds close to the horizon. The water whispers, cajoling me, calling me. It wants me and I want the cold silence found in its bosom. I want to drink it all in, submerged in the murky, acrylic depths. There is no light at the rocky bottom, no noise but the loving murmur of the darkness. There is no light in the sky. There is no light in my life.

A shuddering breath works its way up my spine and through my numb lips. The plume swirls through the cold air, fading. I turn my gaze to the night sky, where one lone star shines. A lonely glimmer, dulled by rippling clouds, fighting to be seen in all the blackness.

The water whispers once more, reaching for me. Not tonight. One foot backwards behind the other. That's all I know. One more night alone, one more night like the tiny star.

Snowflakes hit my face as I ascend from the lake edge; cold water runs down my cheeks, mingling with fresh tears. The mask crumbles away and the light of the moon illuminates my eyes. Eyes full of dreams.

UNTITLED

by John Schuurman





UNTITLED

by Jenna Bos



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 Intoapuddle

PUDDLE

by Taylor Kraayenbrink



LITTLE MAN

by Geoffrey Roome

I am aware of a little man out the corner of my eye. He seems to be carrying something small within his delicate hands. He reaches out with it as if to keep it alive. I am aware of a little man.

“Little man,” I say, “what is that in which you are carrying?”


“A memory,” says the man. I am puzzled. He does not move, but instead takes his time at opening and closing his hand. When he smiles the wrinkles on his cheeks show his affection. I am aware of a little man.


“Little man are you certain of this?” I ask again. “What is it that you are holding?”

“A purpose,” he replies. He continues with his gestures, his eyes ever fixed on his hands. His face looks younger now. I am aware of a little man.

“Little man,” I say, “it will be dark soon. Don’t you wish to come inside?” I reach out my hand from the place I stand.

“No,” he answers. “I think I shall stay warm here.” He has yet to look at me. I can only make out a few lines of his face. His wispy white hair is old and tattered, young and alive. I am aware of a great little man.





“Sir, may I come and see what you are holding?” I lean out of my door and into the cold.

“Yes, please.” says the man. I head over to his side. It is warm by the man. He seems to give off a sort of comfort. I am aware of a humble little man.

“Sir, how did you get here?” I slowly open his hands.

“I came the same way you did.” He is holding nothing and yet something. His hands are old and beautiful.

“I do not see anything here sir. Are you certain of what you have?” He nods his head yes. His eyes watch my hands enter his own. I am aware of a strong little man.

“Little man what is your name?” I feel his scars. His hands are not without pain.

“My name is not my own,” he replies. He holds my hands now. “Let me show you.” He closes my eyes. I am aware of merciful little man.

I open my eyes. I no longer see the little man. I see myself. I look down at my hands. They are most beautiful. They seem to be holding something. I am aware of a giving little man.



LOVE BUGS

by Reagan Butler



UNTITLED MAKE A WISH

by Reagan Butler by Reagan Butler



SHE WILL

by Taylor Kraayenbrink

She will redefine saving you from yourself,
mercifully restraining you from riding
poison knife planes through the healthy pink flesh
of the sky.

We will all wear bamboo bowtie leashes,
and she will leave all stones unturned
building sidewalks without a footprint.
She will harness your whispers as sustainable energy,
and your yawns as a potential alternative to those.
You might want to keep them for yourself,
but if you try, she will throw you under
a bus, sanitary public transit, people friendly, thought activated,
world saving:
for the good of the people, marching dutifully down
naturally occurring non-intrusive trails to green Eden

AURA

by Joshua Hildebrandt

AWAKENING DREAM

by Reagan Butler

Blind generation,
Blinded nation,
Blind to what we don't want to see.
We dream of what we wish could be
while the world is in desperate need
and the answer is in the dreams
of a generation fast asleep.

Don't let us fall asleep,
don't let us close our eyes,
don't let us lose our dreams,
as soon as the morning shines.

Blind generation,
Blinded nation,
Blind to what we don't want to see.
We dream of what we wish could be
while the world is in desperate need
and the answer is in the dreams
of a generation fast asleep.

We've learned
to just close our eyes,
to what we don't wish to see.
We've heard to just turn a blind eye,
but it's not that easy.

Closing our eyes and falling asleep,
doesn't change the oppression,
this world is in need.
Closing our eyes and falling asleep,
doesn't make our dreams
into reality.

Don't fall asleep,
don't close your eyes,
don't lose your dreams,
as soon as the morning shines.

As the morning dawns,
don't let your dreams slip away.
Open your eyes,
and dream through the day.

Wake up and dream.

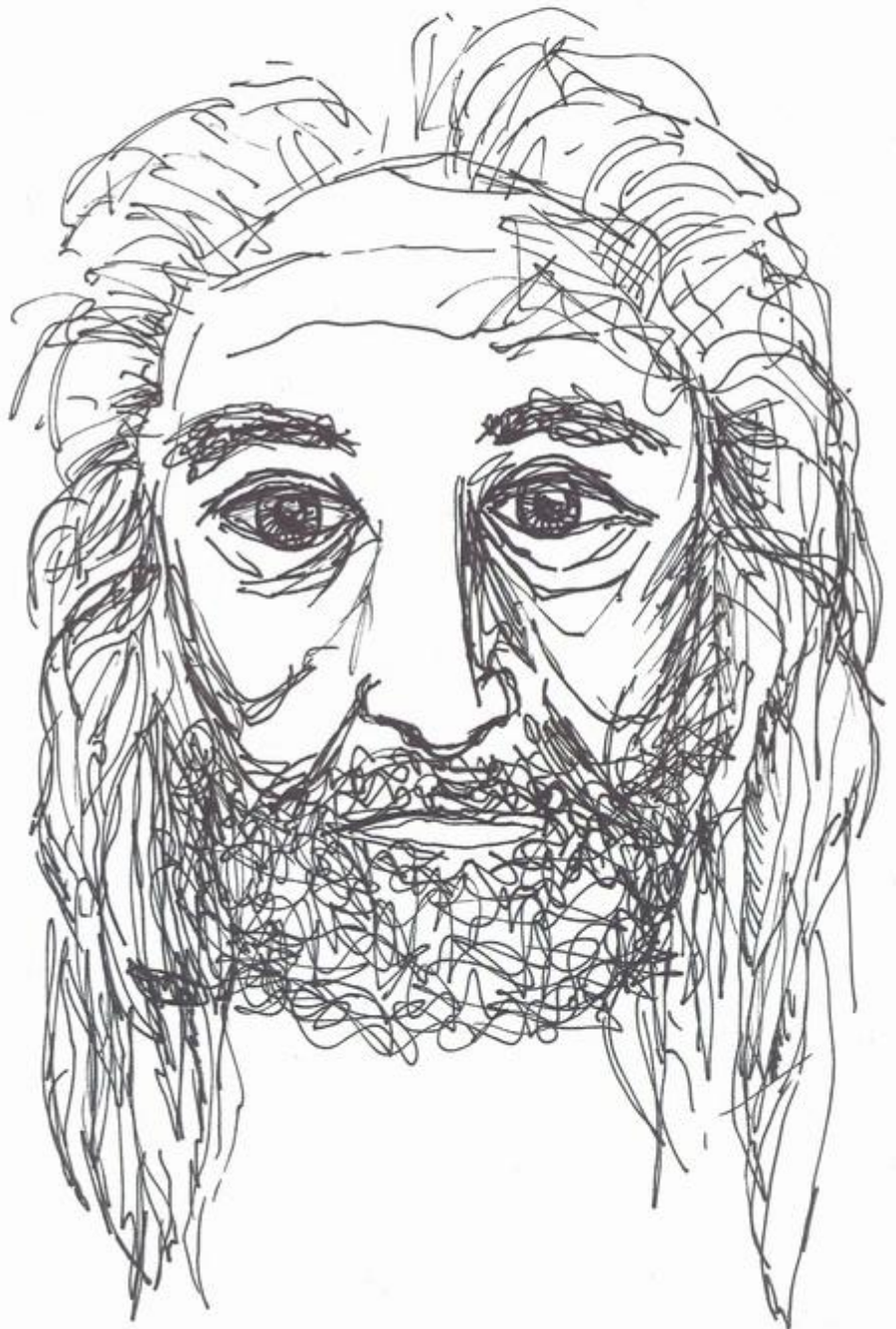
UNTITLED

by John Schuurman



STORIES GROWN OLD

by Jenna Bos



Comrade:

If you go, can I follow?

If you fly, will I fall?

If you kiss the sun tomorrow

Will I miss out on it all?

I am strong when you find meaning,

I am full when you grow wings.

I anticipate the fullness

Of the song in which you sing.

Let me know you as your color,

Let me see you as your smile.

Let me walk along beside you

Or let us sit and wait awhile.

We two will go together, yes,

We two will see it through.

In the morning we'll be perfect

But for now we'll just be new.

COMRADE

by Geoffrey Roome

THERE IS NO WRONG SO TRAVEL ON

by Kimberly Musselman





we saw a smiling sheepdog
down by a restaurant takeout
door near the Copps
and gave him some welcome affection,
and his owner emerged with a late dinner
bagged, a sixty-three year old man
who relates he took the dog upon retiring
from Stelco three years ago, not knowing what else
to do with himself. He is devoted to his dog
to the extreme he has been discussed on local
radio as an unsafe dog lover, reason being he drives
his truck around with the giant animal on his lap.
In welcome incidental discussion he relates with
serene vision his intentions of moving with his dog
to Prince Edward Island, a place, he says, where you go
to the corner variety to grab cigarettes and you are given
hot coffee and fresh porridge complimentary,
along with conversation for breakfast.
A place with no Yankees (he begs pardon for the
expression and looks furtively around—and up, as if expecting
a Tomahawk missile salvo in response to the insult).
Well, some Yanks do actually intrude, and, would you believe it, erect
fences around their cottages, combative measures otherwise
unheard of in those parts—for The Island is a place where you
can drive your truck down the closest beach with a cooler of beer
and fish all night, free of big-world worries and nosy wardens
requesting valid license with photo ID.

He'll move over there
in good time, when his mother passes (not that he wishes the
occurrence) , along with his dog Murphy, and a sister for him
which he will purchase soon as well, and he will rent a farm house
near the good variety stores and fishing.
All this he relates happily and in long wind on a cold Wednesday night
before dinner steadily growing colder in a takeout bag.

BUT I NEVER CAUGHT HIS NAME

by Taylor Kraayenbrink



SWEETY

by Glen Watkinson

She roams desperate
To each corner of her cage
For a roost in the proper plane

Only bars she finds

She flaps desperate
To the heights of her hope
For a floor on the ceiling

Only bars she finds

She grips desperate
To pillars rusted within
For a peek at the shine without

Only gold they see

She looks desperate
To those who love her colours
For one colourblind

Only gold they see

She digs desperate
To rise the depths of memory
For hope in what once was

Only hate she finds

She sings desperate
To a tune she thinks is love
For she never knew a love song

Only hate she hears

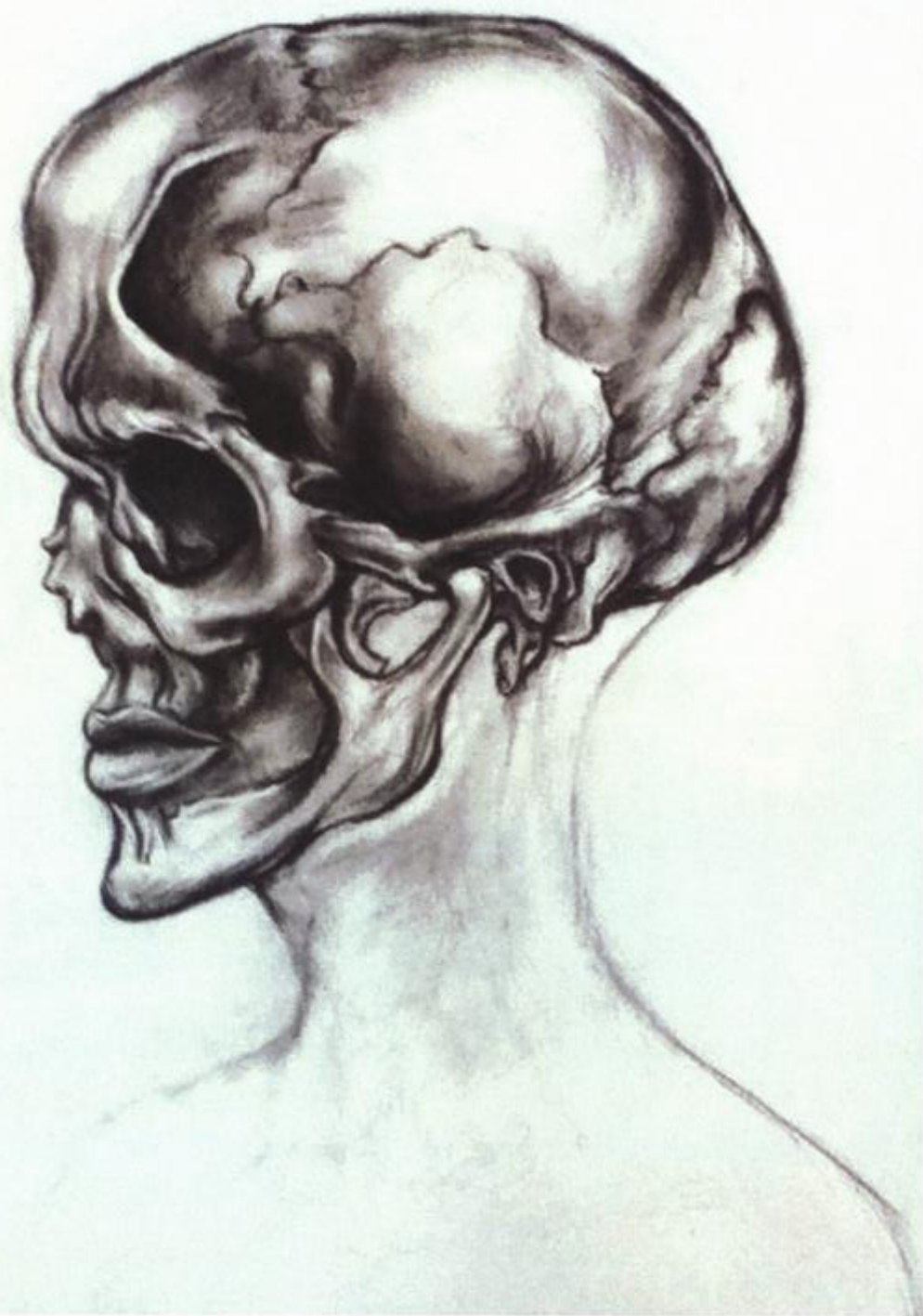
She listens keen
To hear the change of key
For still she sings

Beautifully

Keep singing,
Sweety,
Keep singing

UNTITLED

by Tabitha DiDomenico







VENICE AT DAYBREAK

by Kimberly Musselman

Denial is all you know
living this life of forgotten hope
swimming in lost desires and dreams
when the future appears too dim to see...

Letting go of all the good you know
watch it slide off of the tips of your fingers
indulging in poisons for temporary relief
your insides are upon a pedestal
where no one can reach
a rush of ecstasy
dominates your mind
flying so high
wasting more time...

Lured by the king himself
with no room for anyone else
sooner than later
you'll collide with the ground
falling... falling... with no one around
pummeled upon by the depths of darkness
but the only way out
is to fly again...

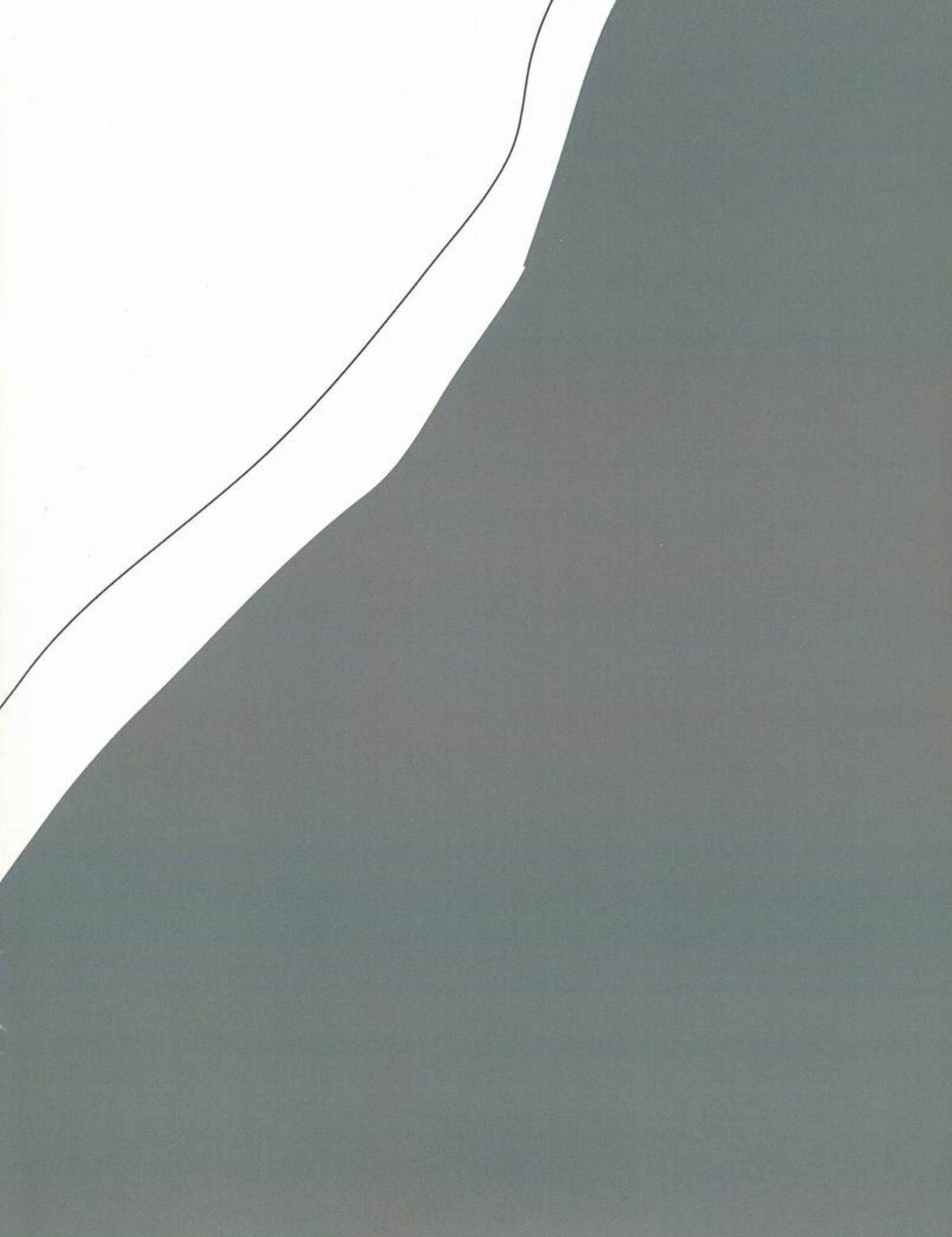
You are all you have time for
running away
and locking the door
I've reached out my hand
as you yank back yours
I've played my role
sitting back
watching the true you unfold...

Comforting words
flowing from your lips
as you walk away
leaving me behind
returning to your make believe time
without ever looking back
I watch you fade out of sight
as I linger here
alone in this night
wishing to return to 'my' fairy tale life...

But mine's not of poisons and lies
but of you and of me
and your always there
wiping away all my tears
but reality snaps
and the world slowly falls into place
and my dreary eyes
once again don't see
you- standing by the door- waiting for me...

THE FAIRY TALE

by Tabitha DiDomenico





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